DUFFY · DWYER · DE CARLO
BATMAN
THE NEW ADVENTURES
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MILLENNIUM
IS COMING

IT'S YOUR FIRST NIGHT IN THE UNITED STATES, YOUR FIRST TIME IN GOTHAM CITY--
-- ONE OF THE BIGGEST, MOST EXCITING TOWNS IN THE COUNTRY. YOU WANT TO DO IT ALL WHILE YOU'RE HERE.
YOU WANT TO SEE ALL THE SIGHTS.
ALL EXCEPT THIS ONE.
the GHOST of Masahiko Tahara
ONE WAY
BRAUN ST W
JO DUFFY • writer
KIERON DWYER • MIKE DeCARLO • artists
DENNIS O'NEIL • editor
JOHN COSTANZA • letterer
ADRIENNE ROY • colorist
6-3220

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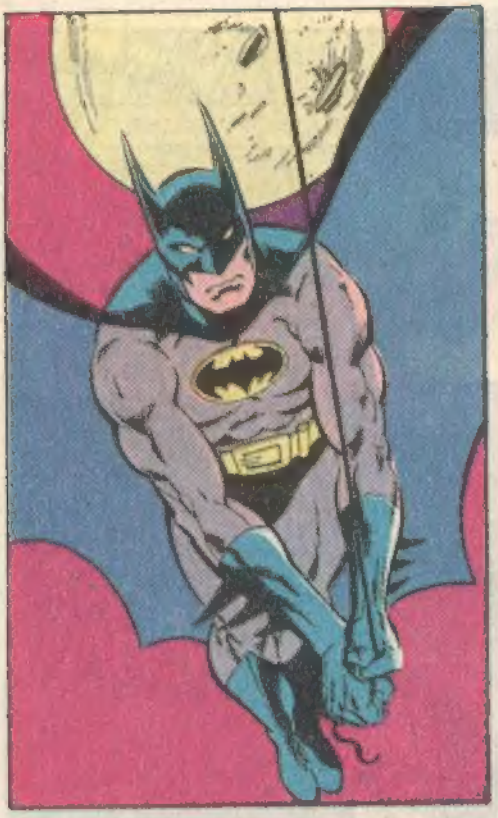
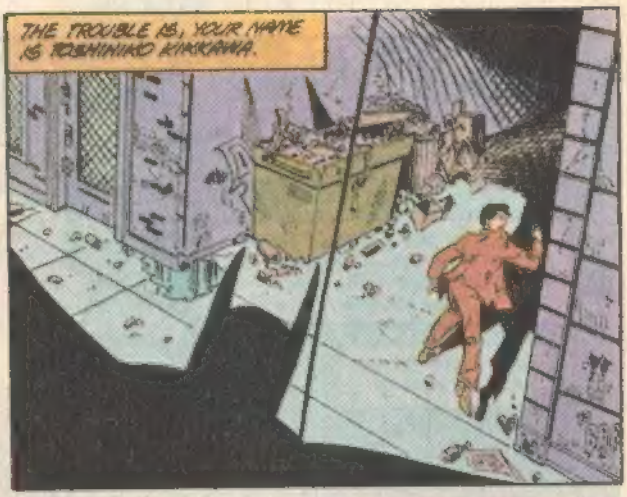
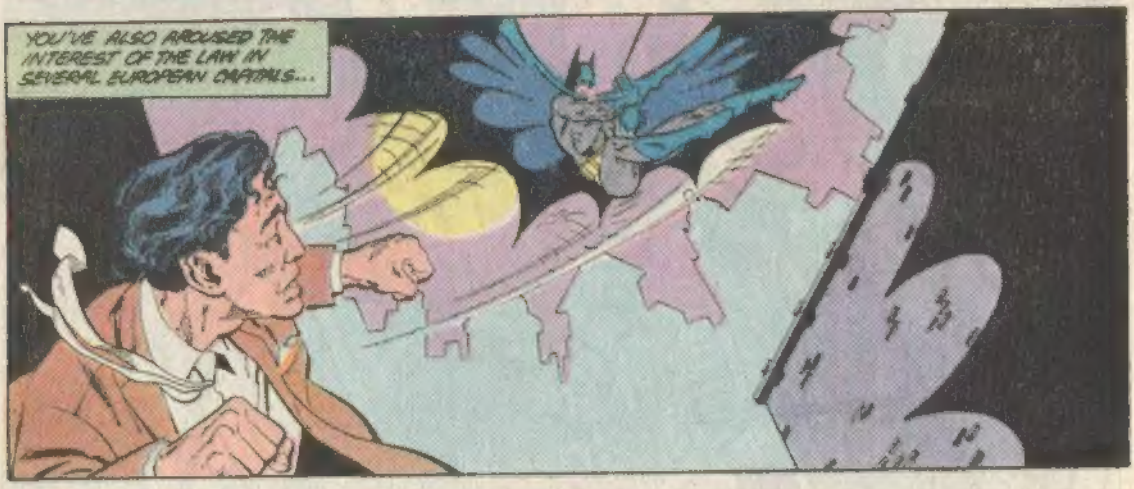



THE TROUBLE IS, YOUR NAME IS YOSHINIKO KIKKAWA.

YOU'RE WELL KNOWN TO THE POLICE OF TOKYO, OSAKA, AND KYOTO...


YOU'VE ALSO AROUSED THE INTEREST OF THE LAW IN SEVERAL EUROPEAN CAPITALS...

...AND OF INTERPOL.

YOU'VE MANAGED TO STAY OUT OF JAIL SO FAR....

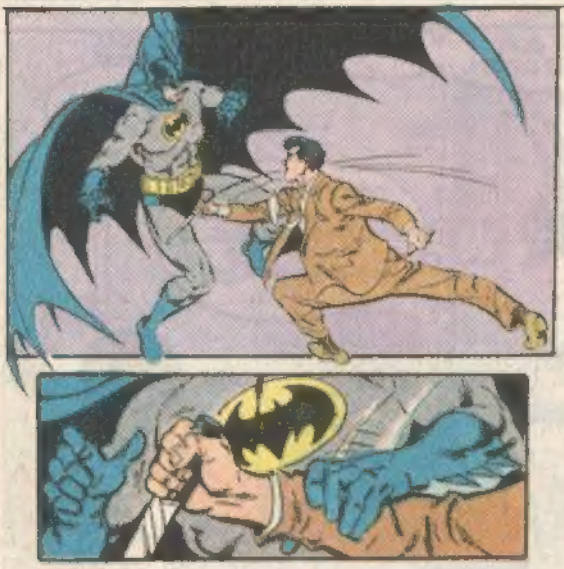
2

BUT THIS TIME, IF YOU'RE UP TO ANYTHING, YOU'RE TRYING IT IN THE WRONG TOWN.

BATMAN!!

KIKKAWA IS PRETTY GOOD.

BUT TONIGHT HE'S WAY OUT OF HIS LEAGUE.



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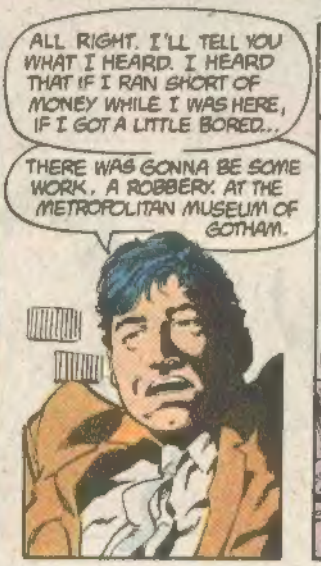
ALL RIGHT. I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I HEARD. I HEARD THAT IF I RAN SHORT OF MONEY WHILE I WAS HERE, IF I GOT A LITTLE BORED...
THERE WAS GONNA BE SOME WORK. A ROBBERY. AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF GOTHAM.

THERE WAS A NUMBER IN TOKYO I WAS SUPPOSED TO CALL, IF I WAS INTERESTED, BUT I NEVER DID.
THAT'S ALL... HONEST.
MAN, I HEARD ABOUT YOU, BUT...

NO ONE FROM THE GINZA'S GONNA COME HERE LOOKING FOR ANYTHING BUT HARD TIMES.
NOT AFTER I TELL THEM ABOUT THE KIND OF CORS GOTHAM CITY'S GOT.

I'M NO COP. JUST A CONCERNED CITIZEN.
HERE.
YOU'RE... GIVING IT BACK TO ME?
DON'T USE IT. AND DON'T GET MUGGED WHILE YOU'RE HERE. I DON'T WANT TO BE BOTHERED WITH YOU AGAIN.
PINK PALS
HOT DOG
4

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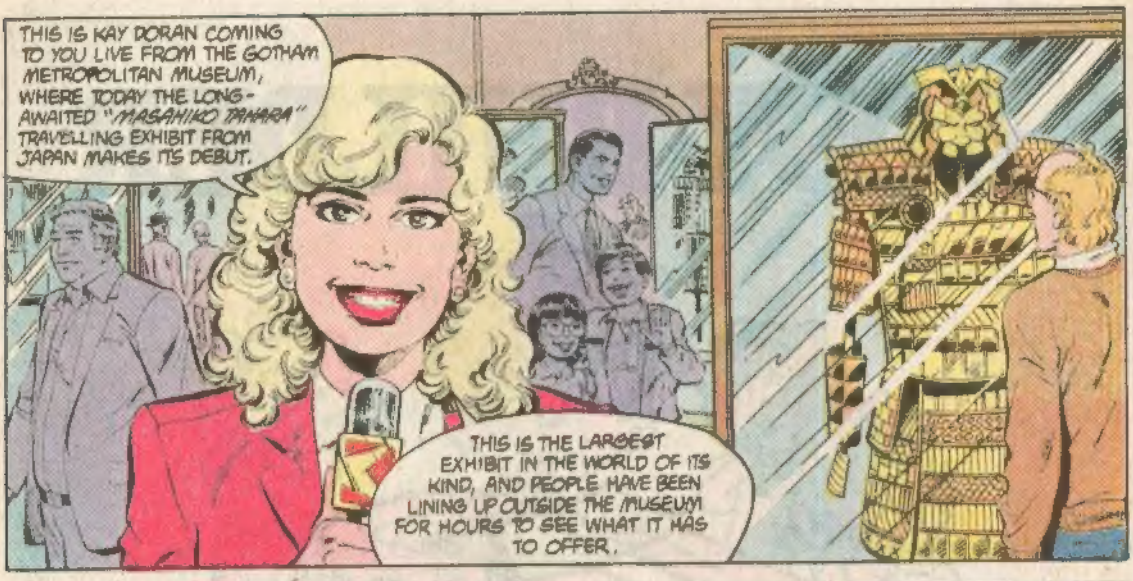

THIS IS KAY DORAN COMING TO YOU LIVE FROM THE GOTHAM METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, WHERE TODAY THE LONG-AWAITED "MASAHIKO TAHARA" TRAVELLING EXHIBIT FROM JAPAN MAKES ITS DEBUT.
THIS IS THE LARGEST EXHIBIT IN THE WORLD OF ITS KIND, AND PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LINING UP OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM FOR HOURS TO SEE WHAT IT HAS TO OFFER.

IT WAS LOANED TO US BY ONE OF THE SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE TAHARA CLAN, WHO LIKE THE SANADAS AND THE TAKEDAS WERE KEY CONTENDERS FOR POWER AT THE TIME THE TOKUGAWAS UNIFIED THE COUNTRY.
MUCH OF WHAT WE SEE HERE TODAY BELONGED TO THE CLAN PATRIARCH AND MILITARY LEADER, MASAHIKO TAHARA...

...WHO, ALONG WITH HIS WIFE, CONCUBINES, AND MOST OF HIS CHILDREN, COMMITED SUICIDE, AFTER THEIR DEFEAT IN THE LATE SIXTEENTH CENTURY BY THE TOKUGAWAS.
IN ADDITION TO A NUMBER OF FAMOUS WEAPONS...

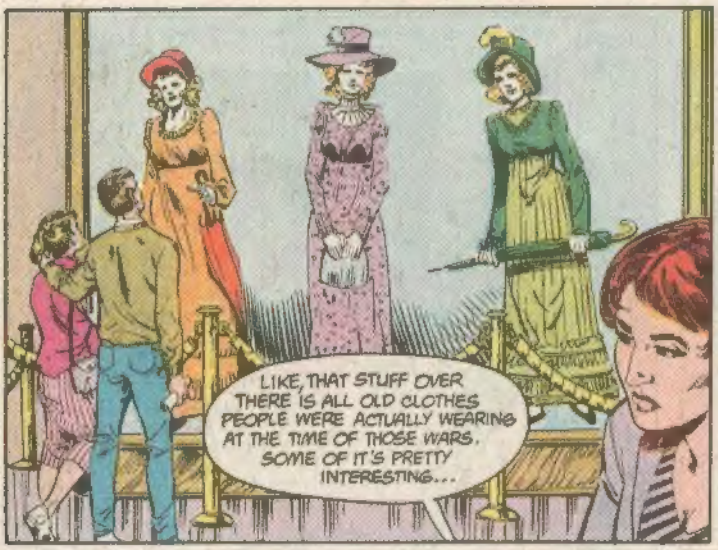
THE EXHIBIT CONTAINS A WIDE VARIETY OF ITEMS OF MORE EVERY-DAY USE...
INCLUDING SEVERAL FINE, HAND-EMBROIDERED SILK MEN'S AND WOMEN'S KIMONOS, WHICH AFTER THE EXHIBIT CLOSES WILL BE DONATED TO THE MUSEUM'S PERMANENT EXHIBIT OF VALUABLE COSTUMES.

THERE IS EVEN A TOUCH OF ROMANCE. ONE TAHARA SON, KOJI, REFUSED TO CALMLY ACCEPT HIS FAMILY'S DEFEAT. AFTER THE SUICIDES OF THE OTHERS...
HE ADOPTED THE COSTUME AND WEAPONS OF A NINJA AND MOUNTED A VENDETTA AGAINST ALL TOKUGAWA SUPPORTERS, BECOMING ONE OF THE ALL-TIME FAVORITE JAPANESE HEROES OF BOTH FACT AND LEGEND.

WE HAVE A NUMBER OF CELEBRITIES AMONG US TODAY, INCLUDING YOSHIO TAHARA, A DIRECT DESCENDANT OF BOTH MASAHIKO AND KŌJI TAHARA, FROM WHOSE PRIVATE COLLECTION THE ENTIRE EXHIBIT CAME --
--AND DR. LUCIUS PITT, THE MAN WHO ARRANGED FOR IT TO COME HERE, AND CURATOR OF THE MUSEUM FOR OVER THIRTY YEARS.
DR. PITT, HAVE YOU ANY COMMENTS FOR OUR VIEWERS?
NO, UH, NONE. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THIS PROJECT.
MR. TAHARA, RUMOR HAS IT THAT YOU SEE YOURSELF AS A SPIRITUAL HEIR TO KOJI TAHARA... THAT WHEREVER YOU GO, YOU MAINTAIN A MARTIAL ARTS DOJO--
--AND WILL ACCEPT CHALLENGES FROM ALL OTHER FIGHTERS. WOULD YOU CARE TO COMMENT?
ONLY BY TESTING HIMSELF CAN A MAN IMPROVE HIS SKILLS. THAT'S AS GOOD A PHILOSOPHY TODAY AS IT WAS FOUR HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
MR. WAYNE! MR WAYNE! I'M KAY DORAN OF THE EVENING REPORT.
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS IS BRUCE WAYNE, FROM WHOSE PERSONAL FORTUNE CAME A DONATION WHICH HELPED MAKE THE EXHIBIT'S VISIT TO GOTHAM CITY A REALITY. MR. WAYNE, DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS?
JUST THAT I WISH ALL THE MONEY I SPENT ACHIEVED SUCH TANGIBLE AND BEAUTIFUL RESULTS.
THANK YOU, AND GOOD NIGHT.
WELL, I'M FREE FOR THE REST OF THE NIGHT...
PLEASE EXCUSE ME, KAY, BUT I SEE SOMEONE I HAVE TO SAY HELLO TO.
6

GOOD AFTERNOON, JASON...I DIDN'T EXPECT TO RUN INTO YOU HERE.

BRUCE! HI! I LEFT YOU A NOTE WHEN I GOT HOME FROM SCHOOL. RIGHT NOW OUR CLASS IS STUDYING EUROPEAN HISTORY--THE NAPOLEONIC WARS--
--BUT THE SCHOOL THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR US TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY, TOO.


LIKE, THAT STUFF OVER THERE IS ALL OLD CLOTHES PEOPLE WERE ACTUALLY WEARING AT THE TIME OF THOSE WARS. SOME OF IT'S PRETTY INTERESTING...

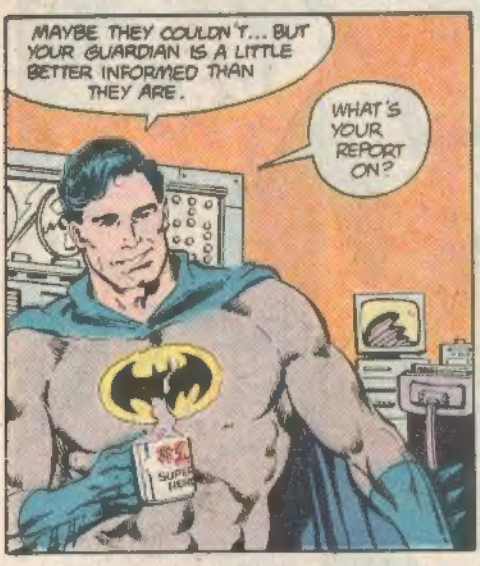
AND THEY SAID WE COULD DO EXTRA CREDIT ON THIS JAPANESE STUFF, IF WE WANTED TO PULL OUR GRADES UP. MY HISTORY GRADE COULD USE THE HELP...

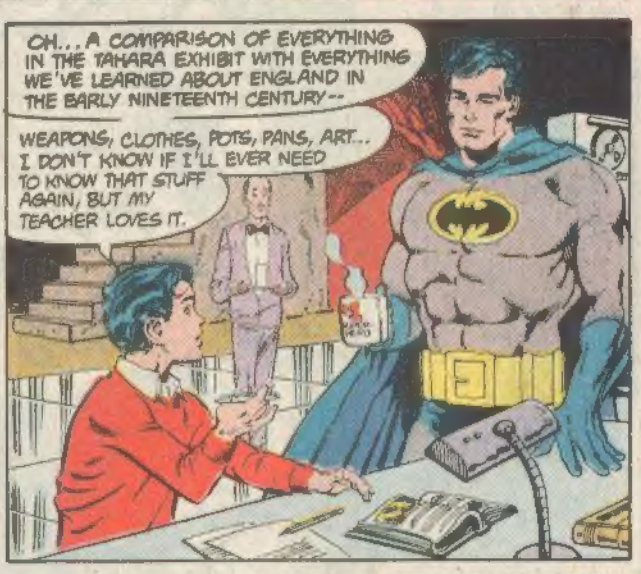
I TRIED THE NUMBER KIKKAWA GAVE ME, AND NO ONE IN TOKYO WOULD TALK TO ME...ABOUT ANYTHING.

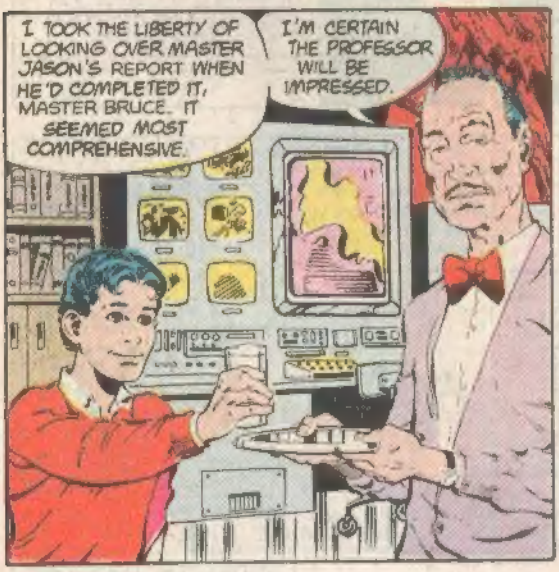
BUT SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, MAYBE IN THE MUSEUM RIGHT NOW, IS UP TO NO GOOD.

YOU DIDN'T MISS MUCH TONIGHT. I PATROLLED THE AREA AROUND THE MUSEUM FOR SEVERAL HOURS, BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF ANYTHING.
HOW ABOUT ANYWHERE ELSE?
A LIQUOR STORE HOLDUP AND TWO GARDEN-VARIETY CAT BURGLARS.
NOTHING BATMAN NEEDED ROBIN TO HANDLE.

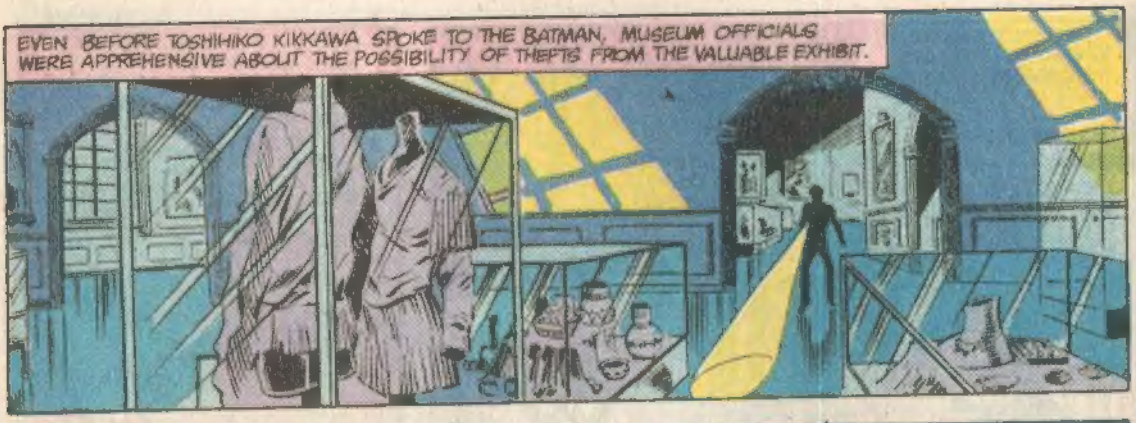
GOOD. I'D HATE TO MISS MORE HOMEWORK AND LET MY GRADES SLIP...
EXCEPT THAT BEING THE BOY WONDER IS ONE ACTIVITY MY TEACHERS COULDN'T CUT ME OFF FROM FOR BAD GRADES.


MAYBE THEY COULDN'T... BUT YOUR GUARDIAN IS A LITTLE BETTER INFORMED THAN THEY ARE.
WHAT'S YOUR REPORT ON?

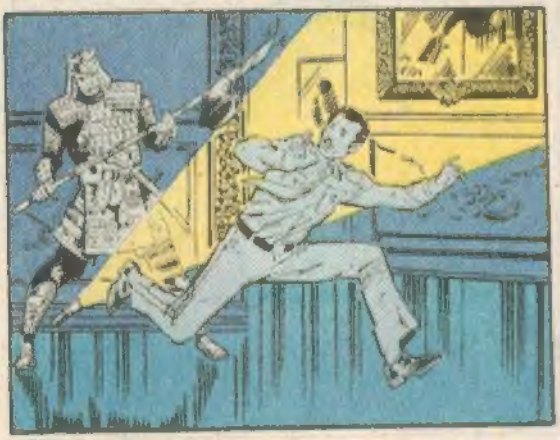

OH... A COMPARISON OF EVERYTHING IN THE TAHARA EXHIBIT WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE LEARNED ABOUT ENGLAND IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY--
WEAPONS, CLOTHES, POTS, PANS, ART... I DON'T KNOW IF I'LL EVER NEED TO KNOW THAT STUFF AGAIN, BUT MY TEACHER LOVES IT.


I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF LOOKING OVER MASTER JASON'S REPORT WHEN HE'D COMPLETED IT, MASTER BRUCE. IT SEEMED MOST COMPREHENSIVE.
I'M CERTAIN THE PROFESSOR WILL BE IMPRESSED.

THANKS, ALFRED. I GUESS I SHOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT MISSING A COUPLE OF NIGHTS ON PATROL.
AFTER ALL, NOT EVEN BATMAN AND ROBIN CAN BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE.


EVEN BEFORE TOSHIHIKO KIKKAWA SPOKE TO THE BATMAN, MUSEUM OFFICIALS WERE APPREHENSIVE ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THEFTS FROM THE VALUABLE EXHIBIT.

WORKING WITH BRUCE WAYNE AND COMMISSIONER GORDON OF THE GOTHAM CITY POLICE FORCE, THEY ARRANGED FOR A NEW ELECTRONIC SECURITY SYSTEM, SPECIAL ALARMS, AND EXTRA MUSEUM GUARDS.
NO ONE IS GOING TO WALK OFF WITH ANYTHING FROM THE EXHIBIT.
OF COURSE, NO ONE ALLOWED FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF THE EXHIBIT WALKING OFF ON ITS OWN.



IN THE MORNING, THE GUARD WILL AWAKEN IN THE HOSPITAL WITH A BAD CONCUSSION AND NOT ANOTHER MARK ON HIM. HE WILL STICK TO HIS STORY OF A GHOST...
...EVEN AFTER HE'S TOLD THAT NOTHING FROM THE EXHIBIT HAS BEEN TOUCHED AND NOT AN ALARM WENT OFF.
9

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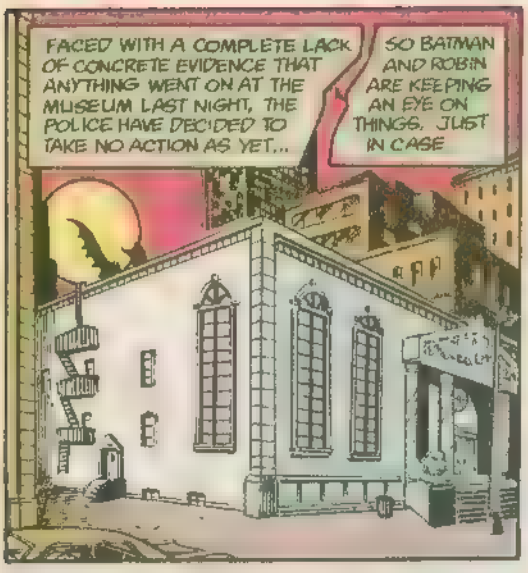
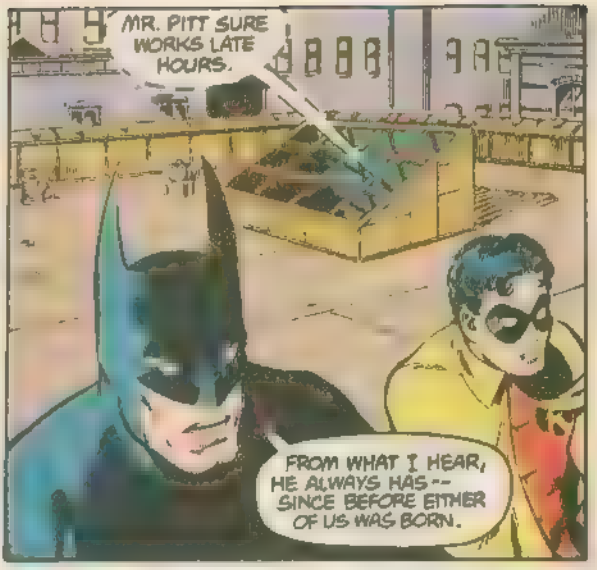
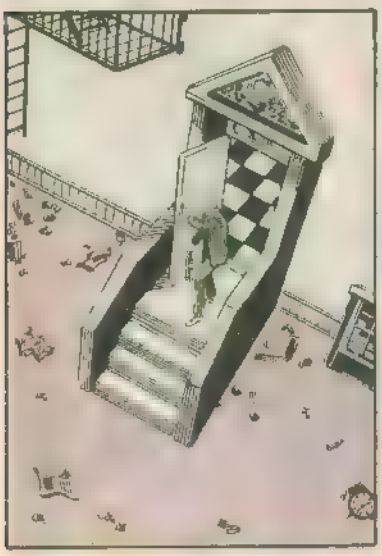
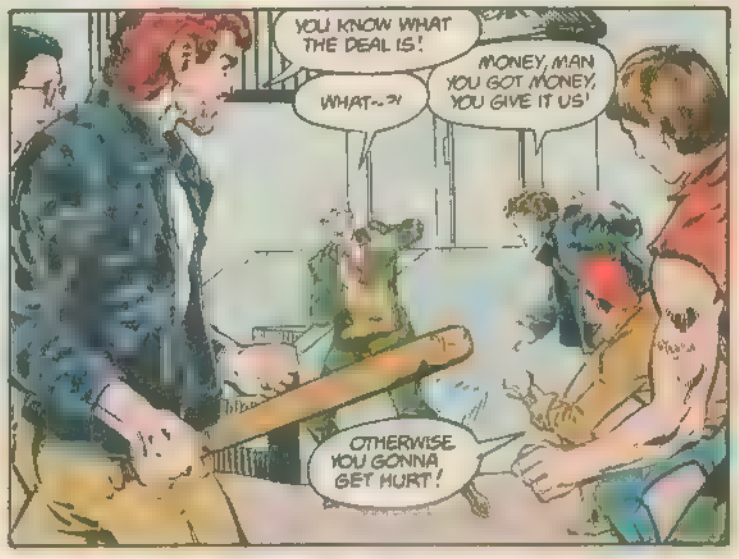
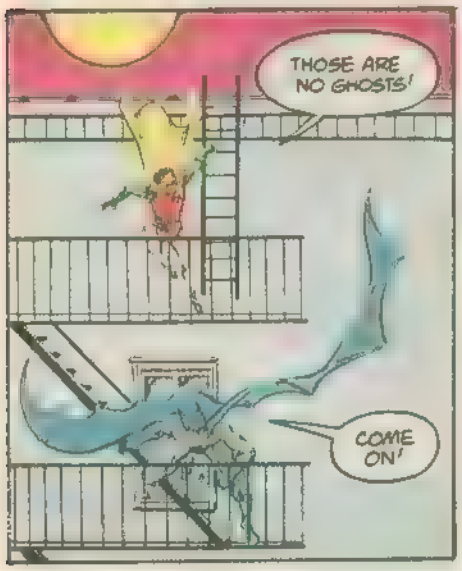

FACED WITH A COMPLETE LACK OF CONCRETE EVIDENCE THAT ANYTHING WENT ON AT THE MUSEUM LAST NIGHT, THE POLICE HAVE DECIDED TO TAKE NO ACTION AS YET...
SO BATMAN AND ROBIN ARE KEEPING AN EYE ON THINGS, JUST IN CASE


MR. PITT SURE WORKS LATE HOURS.
FROM WHAT I HEAR, HE ALWAYS HAS -- SINCE BEFORE EITHER OF US WAS BORN.



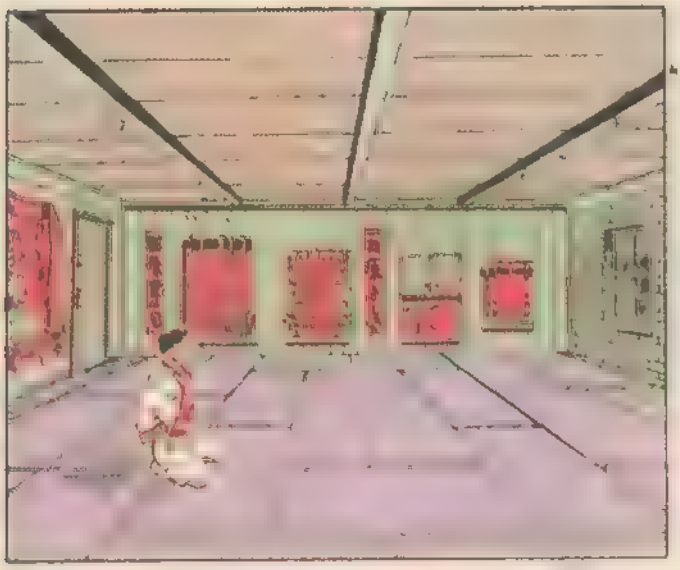

YOU KNOW WHAT THE DEAL IS!
WHAT--?!
MONEY, MAN YOU GOT MONEY, YOU GIVE IT US!
OTHERWISE, YOU GONNA GET HURT!


THOSE ARE NO GHOSTS!
COME ON!

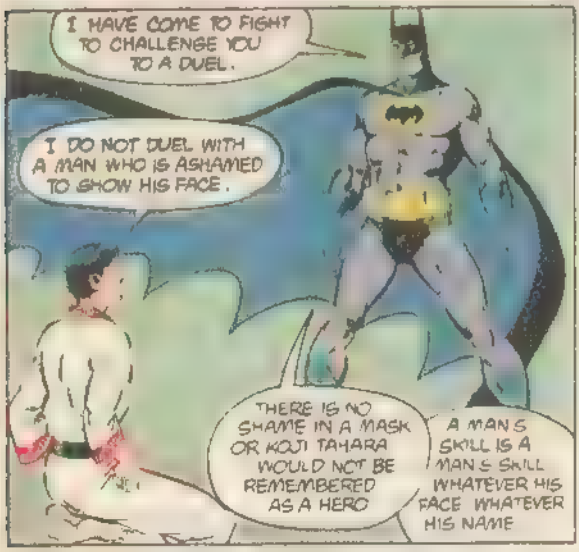
BUT THAT IS!
WAAH!
10

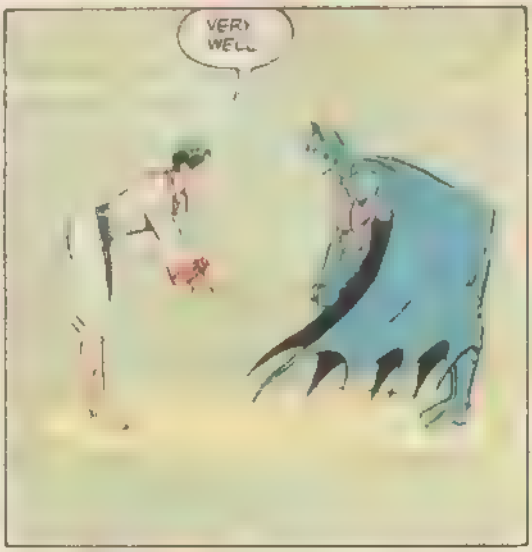
WHATEVER THEY WERE EXPECTING FROM THE APPEARANCE OF THE GHOST, IT WASN'T THIS
YOU'RE REAL ENOUGH TO HOLD, YOU GOTTA BE REAL ENOUGH TO CUT!
FLIK!
WELL EXCUSE ME. BUT MAY I CUT IN?
OH, NO!!
BATMAN!!
HEY, WAIT!

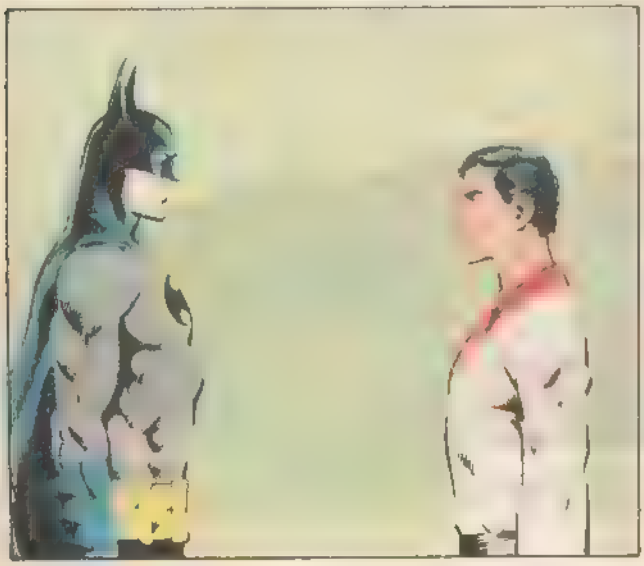
PLEASE HELP ME MY HEART PILLS.
BUT I-- OH HECK
HE WENT BACK INTO THE MUSEUM
R GHT DO WHAT YOU CAN FOR PITT
NO S GN OF THE GHOST
AND NOT A SOUND FROM ANY OF THE ALARMS
BUT THEN SINCE THE EXHIBIT IS ALL WHERE IT BELONGS WHAT IS THERE TO BE ALARMED ABOUT?
PITT FELT BETTER AFTER HE TOOK HIS PILLS AND WENT HOME, AND THE POLICE SENT A WAGON FOR THE OTHERS A PASSERBY CALLED T N
HEY THERE S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT THOSE DRESSES THERE
TELL ME ABOUT T LATER WE LL BRING THE MAGNATA BACK TO THE BATCAVE WITH US



YOU COME TO MY DOJO MASKED LIKE A THIEF, AND YOU DO NOT ENTER BY THE DOOR. HAVE YOU COME TO STEAL?


I HAVE COME TO FIGHT TO CHALLENGE YOU TO A DUEL.
I DO NOT DUEL WITH A MAN WHO IS ASHAMED TO SHOW HIS FACE.
THERE IS NO SHAME IN A MASK OR KOJI TAHARA WOULD NOT BE REMEMBERED AS A HERO
A MAN'S SKILL IS A MAN'S SKILL WHATEVER HIS FACE WHATEVER HIS NAME


VERY WELL



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AND YOU ARE THE GREAT SPIRITUAL HEIR TO KOJI TAHARA?
YES
YOU!

INTERESTING WHEREVER THERE ARE TAHARAS THERE SEEM ALSO TO BE NAGINATAS.
15
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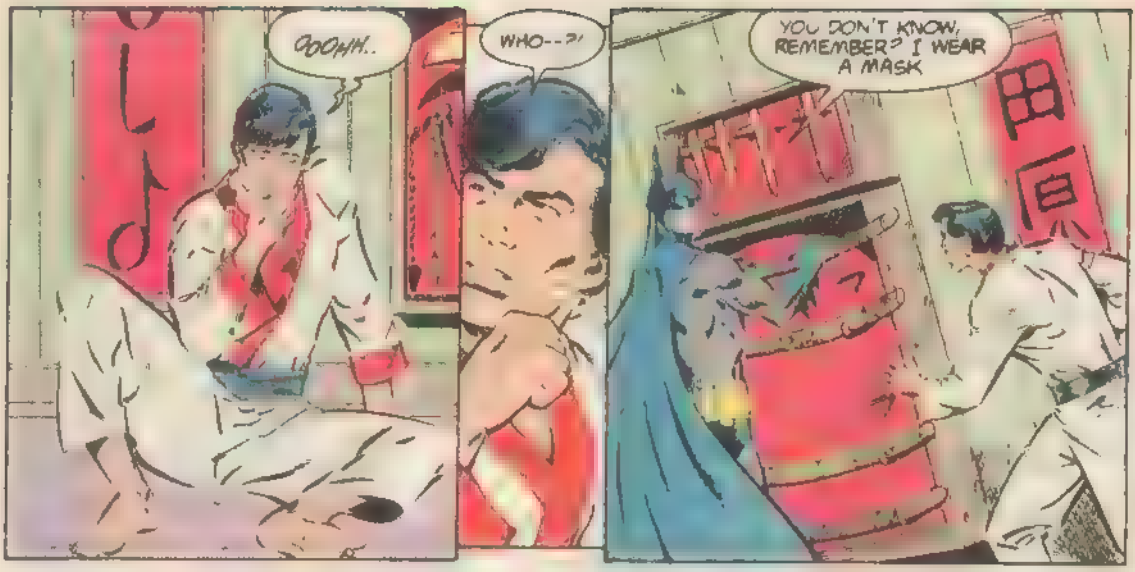
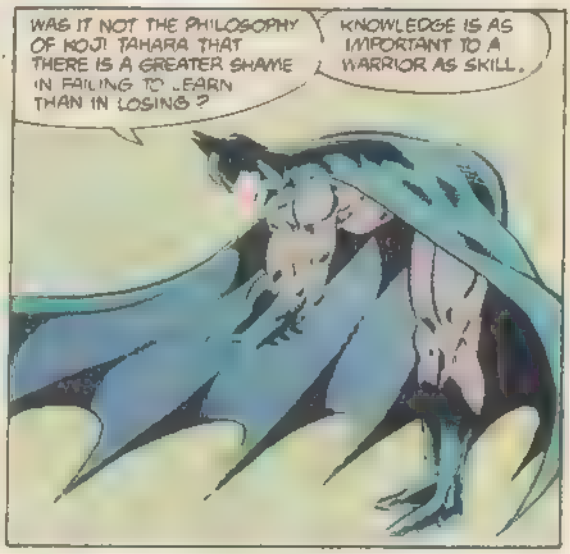
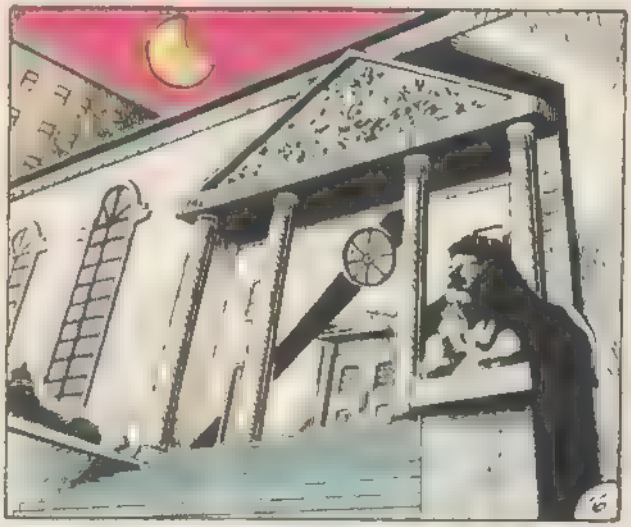

OOOHH..
WHO--?!
YOU DON'T KNOW, REMEMBER? I WEAR A MASK

I AM DISGRACED... DEFEATED BY YOU... AND BY MY OWN WEAKNESS, WHICH WOULD NOT LET ME ESCAPE MY DEFEAT WITHOUT FURTHER SHAME


WAS IT NOT THE PHILOSOPHY OF KOJI TAHARA THAT THERE IS A GREATER SHAME IN FAILING TO LEARN THAN IN LOSING?
KNOWLEDGE IS AS IMPORTANT TO A WARRIOR AS SKILL.

AND I'VE GOT THE KNOWLEDGE I CAME HERE FOR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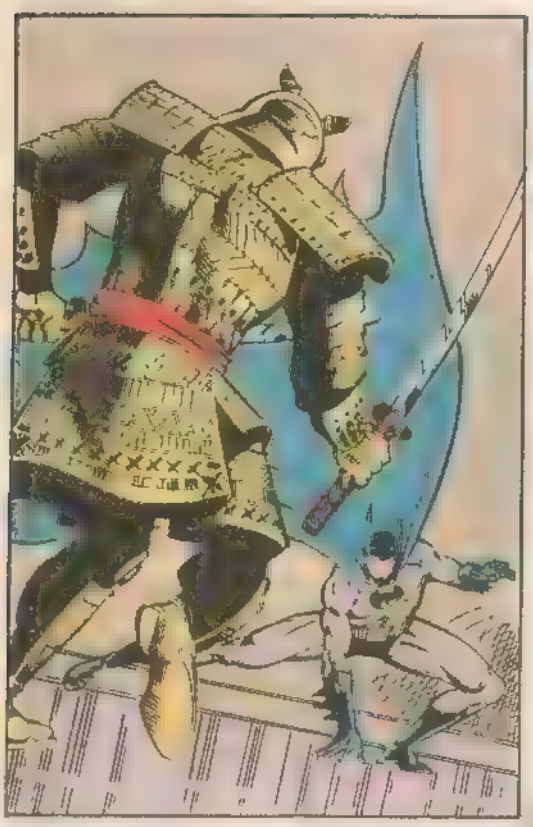
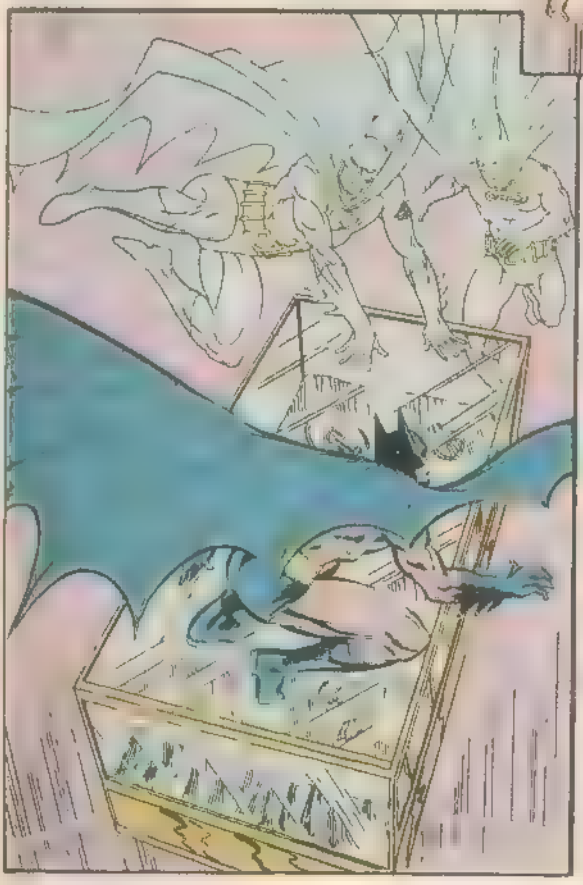
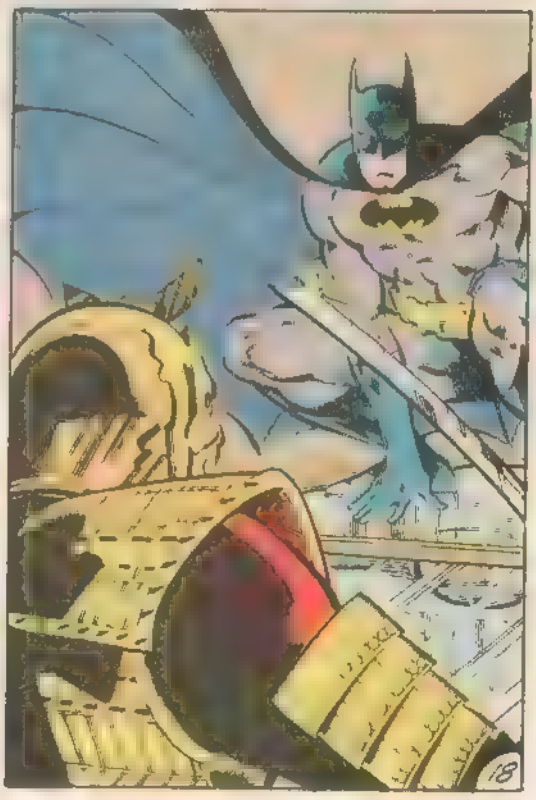
I APPRECIATE YOUR KEEPING WATCH WITH ME LIKE THIS, BATMAN . BUT ARE YOU ABSOLUTELY SURE IT'S SAFE ?
I DON'T SEE WHY NOT MR PITT SO FAR THE ONLY PEOPLE THIS GHOST OF OURS HAS HARMED HAVE BEEN THE MEN WHO ATTACKED YOU!
WHAT WAS THAT ?
I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING
IN FACT, IT'S NICE BEING IN THE MUSEUM ALONE
SINCE THE TAHARA EXHIBIT OPENED, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET INTO THIS SECTION WITHOUT FIGHTING THE CROWDS. .
EVEN IF ALL YOU'RE REALLY INTERESTED IN IS SAY, NINETEENTH CENTURY COSTUMES
THERE'S BEEN NO WAY OF GETTING A GOOD LOOK AT THEM DURING THE DAYTIME
BUT WHY WOULD ANYONE CARE ABOUT SOMETHING THEY CAN SEE ALL THE TIME
FOR THEM TO COME TO SEE ANYTHING BUT THE TAHARA DISPLAY WOULD
LOOK OUT!

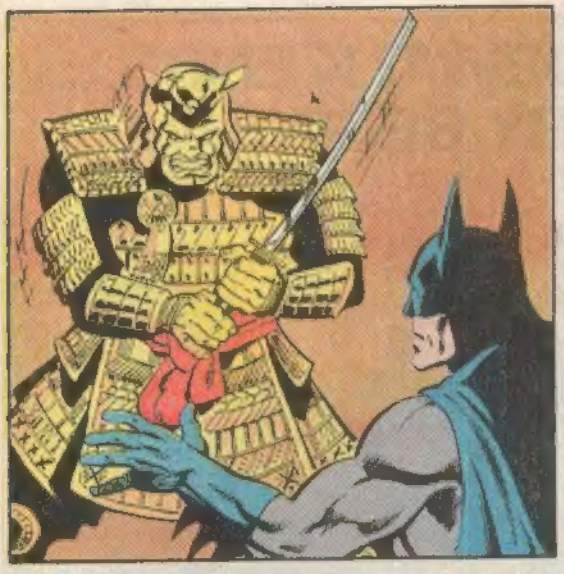






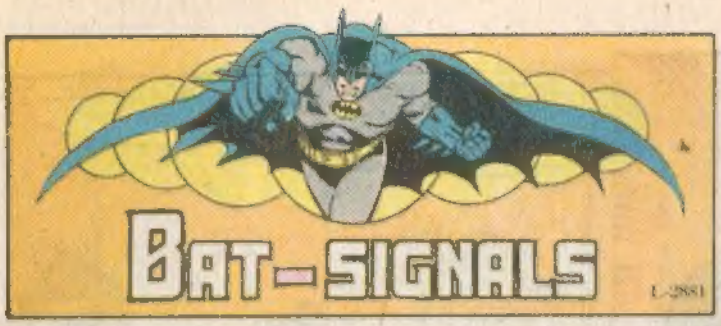
HE CAN'T WIN. HE CAN'T POSSIBLY WIN ALONE!
I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM!
INTERESTING. THIS TIME, INSTEAD OF THE NAGINATA, THE GHOST HAS CHOSEN THE DOUBLE SWORD COMBINATION.
AND HE'S USING IT VERY WELL.
GOODBYE, BATMAN
19

AAAIEEE!
WHO ?
?
INATTENTION IS A BAD MISTAKE FOR ANYONE TO MAKE DURING A FIGHT
20



CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

THERE IS NO GHOST... THERE CAN'T BE A GHOST... IT'S JUST A LEGEND.
JUST A LEGEND... I MADE IT UP!!
I'M SORRY I DIDN'T HELP YOU AGAINST "MASAHIKO," BUT I WANTED PITT TO COMMIT HIMSELF, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, BEFORE I MADE MY MOVE.
YOU DID THE RIGHT THING. THE GHOST WAS NO PROBLEM AT ALL.
I KNEW THIS AFTERNOON, ONCE I'D COMPARED THEIR FIGHTING STYLES, THAT OUR GHOST WAS YOSHIO. EVEN ABANDONING HIS FAVORITE WEAPON AT THE ELEVENTH HOUR COULDN'T CHANGE THAT.
OR THE FACT THAT EVERY WEAPON IN THE DOJO WAS AS OLD AS THE ONES IN THIS EXHIBIT.
ONCE WORD WAS OUT THAT I WAS WATCHING FOR TROUBLE AT THE MUSEUM, THEY MUST HAVE SET UP THE GHOST SCHEME AS A DIVERSION.
ANCESTOR... MY ANCESTOR... KOJI TAHARA...
BUT HE NEEDED AN ACCOMPLICE ON THE INSIDE, SOMEONE WHO COULD ARRANGE FOR THE ALARMS NOT TO NOTICE HIM... NOT SO THAT THEY COULD ROB FROM THE TAHARA EXHIBIT...
... BUT FROM THE OTHER VALUABLE DISPLAYS THAT WERE BEING IGNORED. AND THEY MIGHT HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH IT...
...IF YOUR RECENT INTEREST IN COSTUME HADN'T ENABLED YOU TO DETECT SOME OF THE SUBSTITUTIONS.
RIGHT. AGAINST US, THE WHOLE SCHEME DIDN'T STAND...
...A GHOST OF A CHANCE.
END



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Dear Denny,

I don't know what I expected when I picked up BATMAN #408, but what I got was yet another Bat-treat. A lesser writer than Max Collins would surely have shuddered at the thought of following Miller's YEAR ONE series.

Yet, Max seemed to thrive upon the challenge and allowed the efforts of his predecessor to drive him to even greater heights than normal. So, Kevin Dwayne (from the letter column therein) is going to make his Marvel, is he? Well, that will be his loss because we Bat-fans are having the time of our comic reading lives.

Believe it.

Pete Barnett
21 Exeter Street
Cottingham
N. Humberside ENGLAND

*****

Dear Guys,

With only two BATMAN stories under his hat, Max Allan Collins made the nightmare of YEAR ONE fade away very fast. As a big follower of Max's Ms. Tree and Dick Tracy, I knew he was the perfect choice to lead Bruce Wayne on his assorted cases. Max Collins, in my eyes, is the finest detective writer since the man who brought us Mike Hammer and I'm looking forward to each and every issue. Everyone thought YEAR ONE was hot—well, issue #409 was only a taste of what a true detective writer can do with Batman.

Also, it was great seeing Ross Andru at the drawing table again. He's another master of his chosen craft who hardly gets as much attention as he should.

Yours truly,
Brian P. Daly
50 Rhode Island Drive
Jackson, NJ 08527

No argument here, Brian. Ross really is one of the best pencillers in the industry. In fact, for those of you who enjoy seeing his work, I'd advise you to check out BLUE BEETLE #19 as Ross begins to pencil that series regularly!

*****

Dear Denny,

I wasn't sure that I was going to like Jason Todd as a former street punk, but I always despised him as a former acrobat, so I decided to give him a try. His first reappearance was enjoyable enough, especially when he hit Batman with a tire iron (which did my heart good), but in his second outing he really impressed. In fact, the only real problem with the story was Batman adopting him at the end of it. It was too rushed. The re-creation of Robin needed a third issue to be truly believable.

Max Allan Collins uses more bad puns (if they're bad enough they become good puns) than almost any other comics writer, so why not Faye Gunn? I hope that Ms becomes a continuous thorn in Batman's side because I'd hate to see such a fun character disappear forever. Max overdid the kids' malapropa a bit, though.

Finally, I'm glad that Jason's a natural fighter, although I assume that he doesn't have any real acrobatic talents being the reverse of the former Jason Todd. As long as Jason learns 99% of his skills from Batman, everything will be fine.

Sincerely,
Kevin Lawless
9936 Edgevale Road
Kansas City, MO 64113

*****

Guys,

BATMAN #409 sure doesn't make sense with BATMAN #408. In #408, Batman dumps Robin (Dick) because there's no room in his line of work for a kid like he is. Then, in #409, Batman takes in Jason as the new Robin. Oh, sure. Bring in a little brat who's wet behind the ears. Why couldn't Batman get Dick back? He's already trained and experienced.

Yeah, I know. You had to bring Jason into the story somehow, but I think you made a small error. Don't get me wrong. I like the idea of changing Jason's origin. I never did like the fact that his origin was almost the same as Dick's. It was hard enough to accept that Dick was gone and here was some little kid taking his place. You also solved Jason's hair dyeing problem. Ha! You thought we all forgot about that little fact, didn't you? And you changed the hair style. Just don't change it back to that awful '40's style. You know, the curled inward bangs? Ugghh!

The other thing about #409 that bugged me was the way Jason fought. Sure, he has to know how to fight to survive on the streets, but how could he possibly know how to fight like that? That's not everyday normal street fighting. And don't tell me that he learned it from the movies that he snuck into. That stuff has to be taught first hand.

Before I leave, I just wanted to add that by doing all these changes, you are making years of BATMAN and DETECTIVE comics mean absolutely nothing. You say they never happened. Gee, that sounds familiar. Just like SUPERMAN.

What a waste. You actually expect me to forget all of those issues? You have to be kidding. Those are my favorites. First there was CRISIS and you killed off some of my favorite heroes from Earth 2 such as Batman (years before), Robin, and the Huntress. It's one thing to kill them, but saying they never existed is crap. Now you're messing with past stories and expecting me to forget them. Like #%^&*! I will. You're really pushing your luck with me!

Sincerely yours,
Michelle E. Koller
17151 Heather Lane
Mt. Clemens, MI 48044

Sorry to hear you feel that way, Michelle, 'cause we're really a bunch of nice guys! Actually, nobody is taking any stories away from you. You'll always have those old comics in your collection to read and treasure. No one can take away your memories ... or your personal preferences. It's just that we'd simply like to clean up 50 years of confusing and conflicting continuity for the benefit of all. In fact, here's someone with such a viewpoint.

Dear Crew,

I think all concerned did a fine job with Jason Todd's new origin. And if any of those picky continuity zombies start whining that you're once again "tampering with history" or something, tell them to take a hike. They're not only being childish, they're showing their bad taste. Jason's previous origin was too much of a carbon copy of Dick Grayson's to be believable.

I like the idea of Jason as a street-smart punk. This could make for some amusing culture clashes at Wayne Manor. He is also much more interesting and likeable and a much more suitable partner for the Batman than the immaculately groomed rich boy Dick has always been. I've always felt that Jason wasn't sufficiently developed as a character to justify his almost constant presence. A minority of BATMAN readers are Robin-haters. I'm not one of them, but I partially sympathize with them. A cure for this might be for Jason to retain the rough edges of his life on the streets. Life as a millionaire's ward shouldn't rub off on him completely. Batman should have to constantly tell him to watch his language. He should become a little more gentlemanly, sure, but not a sap. For instance, in DETECTIVE #570, he should have known that Rhonda was a lady-of-the-evening and he should have asked her for a beer instead of milk. Another good idea might be for him

to refuse to have his hair cut. It should stay about the length it is in BATMAN #409. He could keep it combed as Jason Todd and let it go wild as Robin.

My one complaint about this otherwise excellent two-part story concerns the ambiguity of Jason's age. The way Chris Warner drew him in #408, he looks to be about ten years old, which would be right if, as Denny O'Neil says, the story occurs about three years ago. But in #409, Jason looks like he could be thirteen. Tom Mandrake had him looking about fifteen or sixteen (see the portrait in WHO'S WHO). Klaus Janson did the same in DETECTIVE #568. And in BATMAN #402 he could be about eighteen or twenty. However, according to the tombstone at the end of DETECTIVE #571, he is twelve!

Let's have a ruling. Once and for all, how old is Jason?

Sincerely,
Gary Whelan
33 Nelson Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07307

OK, I'm going to go right to the sensei on this one:

"Oh great Denny-lama, just how old is Jason Todd?"

"Ah, weed-hopper, he is 12. Now quit bowing to me and take that silly turban off your head!"

*****

Dear Mr. O'Neil (and the ever-changing Bat-Crew),

Mr. Collins (can I call you Max?), you have rewritten a character that I thought was a dead end. Admittedly, the original Jason Todd character read well. He was young. He was refreshingly naive. He made mistakes like all normal people do from time to time. But his origin didn't seem quite right.

Mr. O'Neil (can I call you Denny?), I remember reading your scripts from years ago—GREEN LANTERN, JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, SUPERMAN, BATMAN and, not that long ago, the stint you spent on Iron Man. You added humanism to the tales that had been chronicled by those (no less talented) before you. I identified with what you were trying to tell me. Damn, these characters are human!

Mr. O'Neil, Batman has been around for as long as I can remember (25 years!). He has existed through enough incarnations (television, comics, cartoons, etc.)... where does it end? Don't get me wrong, the new Jason Todd (as well as the "new" Batman) has me excited. Jason Todd has a new beginning and so does the Batman. Finally, I can also identify with James Gordon.

Denny, here's to the new Batman. Cheers to the new Robin. Let's toast a quarter century of comics reading. Let's hope there is, at least, 25 more years to come!

Thanks for so much pleasure,
Roger D. Case
1139 E. Oceanview #2
Norfolk, VA 23503

Thanks for writing, Mr. Case (can I call you Roger?), and we're glad to see you're enjoying the series so much. However, Batman has been around a lot longer than 25 years. In fact, while Superman is hogging a lion's share of the media's attention right now to celebrate his 50th birthday, let it be duly noted that in 1989, ol' pointy ears will be celebrating his 50th in a big way too!

*****

And now, from the Andy Warhol School of "Everyone is Famous For Fifteen Minutes"...

Dear Guys,

Gosh, you guys are great. I just looove BATMAN comics. So print my letter already!

Jarrod Cline
P.O. Box 544
Dalton, GA 30722

*****

Dear Bat-Brains,

I loved the latest two issues. But that's not why I wrote. I was wondering if maybe, just once, when Batman is recovering from a fight, why don't you have Nightwing and Robin take over as a substitute for the real dynamic duo? Well, think it over.

Got to go. There's this guy at my door telling me there's other comics besides DC. Do you believe it?

Kevin Huxford
1457 New Church Street
Rahway, NJ 07065

Comics other than DC? Sounds like a vicious, sick rumor to me.

*****

Dear Denny,

I think you should re-design the Batmobile. The current one is too small and puny, like a Japanese import. Plus, you've used it longer than any other model. How about the one from the movie? Will it be the same as the television one? How about Batman's costume—will it have the stupid yellow circle? A vial belt? White eyeslits? Will the movie ever be made? Did they even start it yet?

It's bad enough that a SUPERGIRL movie comes out first. However, if they make "Spider-Man meets Kiss at a Partridge Family Concert" before the BATMAN film, someone is going to get murdered!!!

Your pal,
Lee Solomon
29946 Eucka
Warren, MI 48091

Ok, since just about everyone is writing in with the same question, here's a teaser of information on the upcoming BATMAN movie.

Yes, there will be a big budget BATMAN movie, and it will be released through Warner Brothers. At this time, no official casting has been set. However, the film is scheduled to be directed by Tim Burton, whose previous film was "Pee-Wee's Big Adventure" (which just happens to be a DC editorial cult favorite). The script is by a gentleman named Sam Hamm and let me tell you, everybody who's had the proper clearance to read the screenplay has said nothing but superlatives about the finished product. Trust me, the way things are shaping up it's going to be absolutely spectacular!

Well, that wraps up another edition of our column. Keep those cards and letters coming and I'll see you in another thirty days! Take it away, Denny...

—Jonathan

From the Den

Consider this a late-breaking bulletin. Shelley Eiber, in the production department, has already passed up the rest of this page, leaving this hole which we had intended to fill with another piece. But a while ago, I realized that most of you probably weren't expecting the story by Jo Duffy, Kieron Dwyer and Mike DeCarlo you just read, and you may want an explanation. Shelley and her leader, Bob Rozakis, say I can give it to you provided I give it to you in the next 15 minutes.

Okay, quickly:

Regular readers of this magazine, this page, have probably already guessed that it has had more than its share of bad luck-spawned problems. As a hedge against disaster, a few months ago I asked my old friend and one-time editor Jo Duffy to do me a Batman story. She produced "The Ghost of Masahiko Tahara" which draws heavily on her knowledge of and love for things Japanese and, of course, her considerable experience and formidable talent. For the record, I think it's a memorable Batdebut: actionful, puzzling, a touch exotic.

Enter, at this point, Kieron. I liked his samples and wanted to try him on a full-length script. It was okay with Jo if I gave her work to an untried beginner—among her other glories, Jo Duffy is one of the most unselfish writers in the business—so I sent the Duffy script to Kieron.

Can you believe this kid is only 19? Somewhere, sometime, I'll boast that *I* gave *Kieron Dwyer* his first job.

Then my old friend Bad Luck came and perched on my desk lamp and I needed an issue. Yesterday, I rushed "The Ghost of Masahiko Tahara" into production and here we are.

Let me tell you, if all Bad Luck incidents turned out as well as this, I'd be a happy camper.

Let me know if you're as delighted as I am.

And look for more Jo Duffy Batwork soon.

As for next issue ... Come closer: I want to whisper two words into your ear.

Starfin.

Aparo.

Okay, Shelley. *Okay!*